

## The history of Northwest: From a brick to a building

By: Haili Luevano

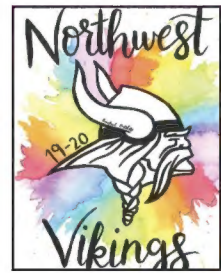
In the fall of 1962, the Grand Island Board of Education announced that students outside of the GIPS district would no longer be accepted in their schools.

Continued on pages 4-5



### New Classes

Northwest is offering a variety of new classes this semester for students to take.



PAGE 3

### Australian Wildfires

From animals to climate impacts: here's everything you need to know about the Australian fires.



Page 5

### A Decade in Review

As 2020 rolls around, we reflect on all the historic moments that the previous decade brought.



PAGES 6-7

### Show Choir Season

The Northwest Show Choir has started competing!



PAGE 10



# Students shouldn't be standardized

By: Emelia Richling



Over the past several weeks, Maryland's congress has been undergoing a massive education overhaul, replacing its current education system with one that is supposed to significantly improve students' scores.

The Maryland house speaker, Adrienne Jones, stated that they "are making education their top priority by nicknaming the education bill House Bill 1." However, the change isn't just occurring in Maryland.

In an article published by The Observer in 2018, Profesor F. H. Buckley spoke out about how our nation "spends more than any other developed country on education," referring to a report published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development conduted in 2017.

In a study conducted by the United States Census Bureau, our country pays \$150,000 for a student's K-12 education, not including the \$6 the government spends on lunches for students each day.

"We're running in place, as other high performing countries start to lap us," said Obama's education secretary, Arne Duncan, in a New York Times article published in 2015.

According to the Program for International Assessment, the United States ranks 31st among the 71 countries surveyed in 2018.

Over the past decade, the United States' scores have remained stagnant; Finland's scores have also remained about the same, but their country is at the top of the list. However, Finland's education system is far different from what we might imagine.

Finland and Japan, the two best education systems in the world, are very laid-back. By eliminating standardized tests, providing problem-solving research opportunities, requiring extracurricular participation and creating a relaxed atmosphere, the United States can emulate excellent education systems while also implementing an intellectually-stimulating curriculum that Finland and Japan can't fit into their budgets.

Standardized tests have been thrown into the

education system in order to measure how much a student has learned. However, there are some people who believe that filling in bubbles to answer pre-canned questions doesn't encourage long-term learning.

In Finland, there is one optional test offered each year. Instead of using standardized tests, the government measures the progress of students on an individual basis, encouraging students to love learning rather than learning to pass a test.

This is where the United States' large budget for its students can come in. By eliminating standardized tests, this would leave a gap in the budget that our nation can use to better evaluate students. Instead of encouraging students to think about what they want to be when they grow up, we can use our system to ask students what problems they want to solve. By offering programs that allow students to use their learning to solve problems, such as diseases, climate change and government structure, our system can allow innovation to craft our students' minds into powerful problem solvers.

Another difference between average education systems and exceptional education systems is what is required of students. Rather than the average education system, which piles homework onto students, an exceptional education system gives students no homework. Instead, it requires students to participate in extracurriculars. This allows students to pursue their passions at school, whether they start a club or participate in one that already exists.

Finally, it is important that our schools create a more relaxed atmosphere. In Finland, the school day is only about six hours long, and it starts about an hour later than the United States' school day. In addition, the time between classes is closer to 10 minutes, giving students time to relax before going back to class. During their lunch break, students are allowed to go outside and enjoy recreational activities, creating a more relaxed, happier environment.

As states across the nation consider reforming their curriculum, there are multiple aspects that we can alter to make our education system better than ever before.

## VIKING SAGA

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The Viking Saga is the official student publication of Northwest High School in Grand Island, Nebraska.

It is printed by the Grand Island Independent nine times (monthly) throughout the school year. The paper is a member of the Nebraska High School Press Association.

Outside submissions, suggestions, or letters to the editor are welcome and encouraged. They may be brought to room 332, or emailed to Ms. Gilliland at [kgilliland@ginorthwest.org](mailto:kgilliland@ginorthwest.org). Any and all submissions must be signed to be considered for publication, and the editor reserves the right to edit or print any submissions.

VikingMedia





# New class introduces current events

By: Gabriel Lorenzo

Dylan Nicol's 4th-period "Current Issues" class is a new addition to the courses at Northwest High School. This class introduces students to events that are currently happening. This class gives opportunities to be able to understand history in today's terms.

"[In this class,] we're just talking about anything that is relevant to today's culture, today's society, today's economy and anything like that," Nicol said.

Ethan Bryant, a junior who is participating in the new class, adds on to what Nicol explained about the atmosphere of the class.

"We talk about topics that are happening at the very moment," Bryant said. "Mainly, it's a class where you talk a lot. If you don't talk, you don't pass. You won't get in trouble if you speak out."

Bryant mentioned a discussion about the government taking action on cellphone use for adolescents.

As his first teaching year rolls on, Nicol shares his past experiences and applies them to his teaching curriculum.

"I student taught [this class] in Aurora, and Mrs. Jeanette Ramsey came to me and asked if I would like to teach it. I said 'absolutely' and that's where it came from," Nicol said.

Nicol felt positive about spending time talking about current issues and has a good number of students that joined his class.

"I wasn't sure how interested some of the students would be, and [I] put up a [survey] on what topics we should talk about," Nicol said. "The list was very long and very broad, so that gave me a lot of hope on what to talk about," Nicol said.

Bryant thinks that there is an importance to learn and under-

stand the events that happen at the moment. He also adds that the best part is that the teacher won't tell you to stay quiet and enjoys the opportunities to have time to discuss. As he looks forward to the future of the class, Nicol expresses his optimism.

"I think the exciting part and the nervous part as a teacher is it's different every single day," Nicol said. "It's hard to plan for it because I don't know what's going to be current today, tomorrow, next week, next month."

Today, there are many current issues that most people will talk about. The purpose of talking about these events not only tells us how they happen and why they are happening now, but we can also reflect in order to make the world a better place.



# Debate class teaches students how to argue

By: Trinity Sossong

Debating is one of the most common parts of socialization, whether it be arguing over your favorite sports team or participating in court. Northwest High School has welcomed its first debate class this year, and it kicked off with eight kids in the class. Although, Brian Mohr ran the class, Bryce Harrington now runs it.

Debate class is used to help students develop skills of forming logical arguments and being able to logically refute arguments. In the class, students will be discussing the fundamentals of debate, then later talk about two main types of competitive academic debate; congressional debate and public forum debate. Towards the end of the year, they will learn how to form public persuasion campaigns, as well.

The idea to introduce a debate class to Northwest was proposed by Mr. Mohr last year.

"The professional organization that I am in, the Nebraska Speech Communication Association, has advocated that every school in Nebraska should have a debate class," Brian Mohr said. "Our curricu-

lum director, Jeanette Ramsey, was really excited that we were offering it. She, too, thinks it's a really important skill for students to have."

Although it is unknown if Northwest plans to spread the class or not. As of now, there's only one class period.

"Even today I use the skills I learned from the debate classes that I took in college. For example, how to find credible sources, or how to make logical arguments. It's important to know how to refute an argument in a respectful way without resorting to a personal attack. Right now, in our current political climate, it's important for students to know how to respectfully listen to each other, even if they have different opposing viewpoints and how to have a rational discussion even when there is disagreement," Mohr said.

Overall, debating has some great opportunities for anyone's future and can also open up skills that can help people's futures. Debating takes place everyday, whether it be "arguing" over the last donut or debating a favorite book.



## Continued from page 1

"I don't think most kids know anything about the beginnings of Northwest -- how much GISH played in the role of who could come here and who couldn't," said Marty Moser, Freshman Academy administrator.

It was then that those students' parents formed together to create the Northwest school district.

"In a matter of 6 months," wrote Mike Shafer, school board member. "We went from the first meeting to form the district, to forming a school board, hiring a Superintendent, purchasing ground, hiring an architect, hiring a general contractor to build the school, hiring a staff..."

Every building was constructed from the dirt, and, in its haste to be built, Northwest's floors stayed this way for a time. It took seven months for the school to be up and running, although much of it was still under construction by the time the first students walked through its doors.

Composed of a beam and column frame and a prestressed concrete roof, much of the building's walls were, and still are, constructed in a way so that they could easily be torn down and added on to. This eventually happened in 1967 when a west wing was added to the school. Today, students know it as the Freshmen Academy.

What some may not know is that this isn't just a nickname for that hallway, but an actual program led by Moser that focuses on helping freshmen adapt to a high school setting.

"This is the fifth year of it, and it's been doing really well," Moser said. "I've got nine teachers that I work with. There's two in each area. I have two social studies, two English, two math, two science and a resource teacher... We meet once a week, we keep track of their grades and how they're doing socially, emotionally."

More reconstruction followed in 1977 and the late 2000s, in which the newest gym and auditorium were built, followed by the art room, alternative education room, drama room and a remodeling of both the boys' and girls' locker rooms.

These aren't the only changes that Northwest went through. Without an auditorium to start off with, the wall housing the infamous

Viking mural in the old gym used to be a stage.

"That's where they would do their music productions," said Sharon Placke, business manager. "The stage was probably eight feet up and was open... That was probably in 1988 or 1989."

The old gym is also where the first homecoming was held.

"They did a bonfire in that gym because it was still dirt floor with no roof," Moser said. "It really wasn't homecoming because there was no graduates to come home."

Outside of the gym and in several other hallways, the floor is made of terrazzo. This is a type of flooring that, when wet, the concrete is enlaid with small stones that lock together when the concrete dries. It's then smoothed out and waxed over, creating its unique look. This feature is most prominent in the freshman hallway and by the chemistry labs.

Enlaid in the terrazzo by the freshman hallway is the familiar NW sigil. This sign used to be encased in a square wood frame with clear plexiglass on top, elevated around three or four inches off of the floor. This was because of a legend that by stepping on the NW, especially on game days, would bring bad luck.

"After the first year that I was here, we had several students that bumped into this or fell down, so we put away the frame," said Tim Krupicka, principal. "I hate to not follow the legend anymore, but I think there's still enough stories around that a lot of students don't walk directly on the NW."

He continued by mentioning another unique trait of the Northwest district.

"Most high schools in the state of Nebraska have their high school at the center of their school district," Krupicka said. "Our high school sits at the center, just like other districts, but right across the street in all directions around us is not Northwest district. It belongs to GIPS."

This is the real reason why Northwest has so many option students. It's also why people who live close to NW are recommended to attend Senior High even though it's further away.

Expanding on Northwest's relation to GISH, the rivalry between the two schools has even deeper roots than one might think.

"There was a lot of animosity between the farm community and the Grand Island community," said Mike Saddler, social studies teacher and freshman football coach. "I don't think people truly remember how churches were split. Family feuds happened because of the farm kids not being allowed to go to Senior High anymore."

One remaining aspect of this feud is the everlasting nickname "Cow Pie High." In the beginning, there was no football field for the teams to practice on, so the parents of the football kids would load them up in their horse trailers and drive them over to the field by the old veterans' home. As they passed GISH, the Islanders would yell, "There goes Cow Pie High!"

There remains a multitude of interesting facts about Northwest and its growth throughout the years. Students in 1963 built their own desks during class. The shop classes focused on patching up parts of the school that were incomplete or needed fixing. There used to be an open courtyard where the media center is now. It wasn't until 2007 that Northwest became a K-12 school rather than just a 9-12.

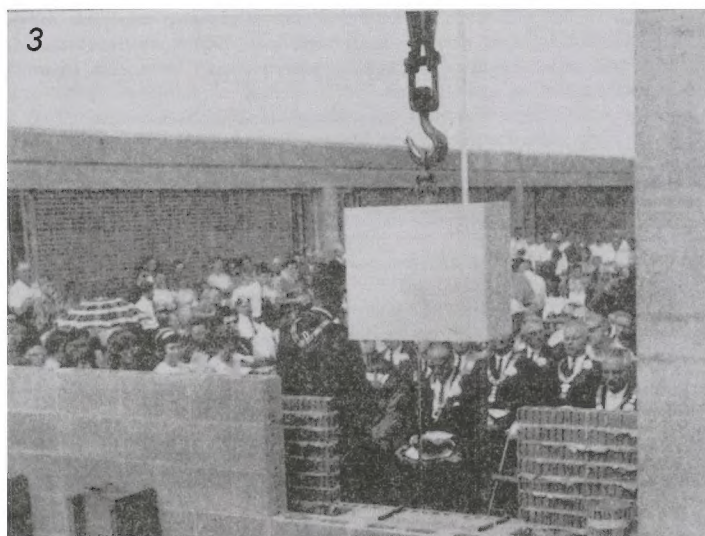
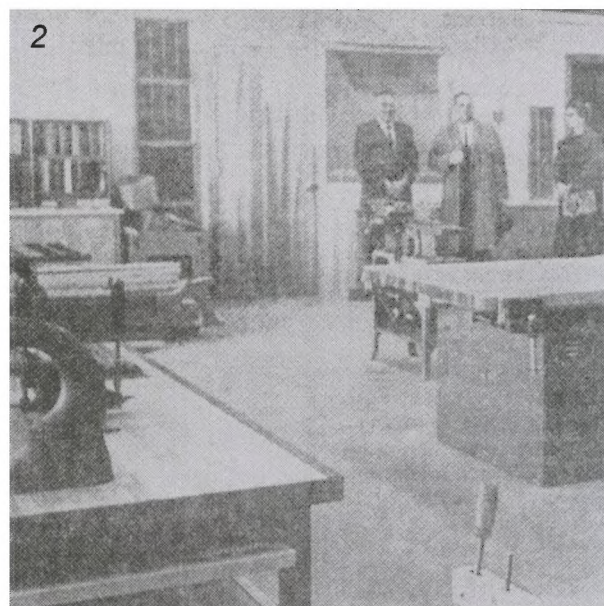
There have been more recent additions as well. Art students painted the hallway in the media center and the outside wall of the chemistry labs, and the mats along the lower walls of the big gym were replaced with the school's new, trademarked logo on January 7.

As students, we suffer through the drippy ceilings, insane heating and air conditioning systems and the occasional smells that waft from the cooking classes or chemistry labs, but the one thing that will never change is the infamous Viking pride that NW harbors (pun intended).

So, take a closer look at the walls and the floor, take into account where the lines end abruptly and the bricks change color or size. Step back and look at the school from a different angle, tilt your head and contemplate how the exterior of the building looks somewhat like a Viking ship.

Northwest has had years to grow and expand, but it only takes a moment to realize that it was born from grit and determination, just like its staff and students.





1) Hall County Superintendent Eldon Cunningham, left, and Merrick County Superintendent Emil Friesen break the ground in the first construction of Northwest.

2) The first layout of the shop class.

3) Ralph M. Carhart, grand master of the Masons of Nebraska, addresses a large crowd before placing the cornerstone, shown suspended.

4) President of the Class 6 Board Education, Eugene Seier, invites grand master of the Masons of Nebraska, Ralph M. Carhart, to officially lay the cornerstones.

5) Student Council President Harris "Butch" Wahl, Seier, Cox and Board Secretary Mrs. Vivian Aschwege (from left).



## 2010

- In the first month, the worst natural disaster of the decade struck when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake shook Hispaniola. It killed nearly 250,000 and impacted 3 million people. Throughout the rest of the decade, the island has continued to repair itself, bringing about one of the greatest humanitarian relief efforts of all time.
- The past decade was marked by incredible technological advancements when the first iPad came out as well as the iPhone 4. This propelled the next decade into incessant improvement in technology, leading to items such as the PlayStation, Xbox, Amazon Echo, Apple Watches and Pokémon GO.

## 2011

- On May 2, Osama bin Laden, the mastermind behind the 9/11 terrorist attacks, was killed. Sadly, this did nothing to discourage terrorist attacks as they continued over the decade. Terrorism continued at the Boston Marathon, a nightclub in Florida and numerous other attacks around the globe.
- In September, 1,000 people marched under a banner that read "Occupy Wall Street." They were advocating for income equality and to overhaul what they saw as a failing financial system. This caused similar protests in dozens of other cities across the nation. In addition, activists took their message to social media, using the platform in new ways.

## 2012

- You may all remember the "Gangnam Style" video that became the most-watched video. It took the world by storm, and it even broke YouTube's play counter, exceeding the maximum number of views. It held the title for five years until it was surpassed by the music video for "See You Again," written by Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth, which became the most-requested pop song at funerals.
- In November, President Obama was re-elected for a second term. He advocated for same-sex marriage, attempted to preserve the environment by vetoing the Keystone XL pipeline and promoted ObamaCare.



Photo Courtesy of The New York Times



Photo Courtesy of The Gaurdian

## Decade in review

By: Emelia Richling

Over the past 10 years, the world has experienced achievements, tragedies and memorable moments that will define the way we will look back on this decade in our history books.

## 2013

- In June, it was discovered that our government, specifically the National Security Agency, actively hacked into the databases of big tech companies to steal user's personal information. This incident was given the codename "PRISM." After PRISM and to this day, it is still hard to believe that our private data is really private.
- When North Korea broke all peace pacts with South Korea, it inflamed tensions between the two countries and the rest of the world. Then, Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, started a nuclear weapons program. The rest of the decade would be marked by tension across the globe.

## 2014

- In March, a Malaysian Airlines passenger jet disappeared. For years, it has been the root of many conspiracies. Only a few months ago, it was discovered that the plane was most likely intentionally crashed by the pilot.
- On April 25, the Flint Water Crisis broke out, killing 12 people and making 80 others dangerously ill. The water was discovered to have lead in it after the city switched from treated, safe water to the Flint River. As a result, lead from aging pipes leaked into the water supply. It sparked national sympathy for the thousands of children who will suffer from the effects of lead poisoning for the rest of their lives.

## 2015

- In June, same-sex marriage was legalized in all 50 states when the Supreme Court ruled on the court case Obergefell vs. Hodges. This landmark decision would help the gay community in the United States, but there are many countries in which gay marriage is still oppressed.
- In October, Google let a blind man drive in a completely driverless car. This sparked the multibillion-dollar race to create safe, driverless cars.
- In December, the Paris Climate Accord was signed, requiring countries to limit their greenhouse gas emissions. Although it wasn't successful, it prompted government efforts to hold climate change at bay, an issue that has continued into the new decade.

## 2016

- After a tense and bitter year of debates and presidential campaigning, Donald Trump clinched the 2016 presidential election. Trump capitalized his campaign on eliminating political correctness, solving discontent for working-class voters and targeting the Washington establishment. Over the next several years, Trump lowered the unemployment numbers and allowed the economy to prosper.
- In mid-2016, Britain held a vote to determine whether they should leave the European Union. It passed by only two percent. Since then, Britain has postponed deadlines for withdrawal, and, as it enters into the new decade, still has not left the European Union.



Photo Courtesy of The Washington Post



Photo Courtesy of The Inquirer

## 2017

- In August, an awe-inspiring total solar eclipse passed over the United States. The next total solar eclipse will occur on April 8, 2024.
- Although Colin Kaepernick first chose to kneel in 2016, the movement reached its peak in September of 2017. Whole teams chose to sit out or kneel on the 50-yard line in a demonstration of solidarity.
- In October, the #MeToo movement took off after a report of Harvey Weinstein's assaults against famous actresses became public. Harvey Weinstein was a famous American film producer. In the aftermath of the discovery, millions of people came forward to discuss their own similar incidents.

## 2018

- In May, the second major Ebola outbreak of the decade began in the region of Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It led to more than 3,000 deaths, making it the largest Ebola outbreak in the country. It wasn't nearly as destructive as the Ebola outbreak that occurred earlier in the decade that led to nearly 30,000 cases. The second epidemic showed that our international efforts to solve problems can do more than just fix epidemics.
- In November, the deadliest and most destructive fires in the history of California ravaged its landscape, causing destruction to almost 2 million acres. Many credit this incident to climate change, so it caused a surge of activists to rally around a solution.

## 2019

- In April, the first-ever picture of a black hole was taken. With a mass of 6.5 times that of our sun, it is difficult to imagine, especially since it is 55 million light years away from Earth. It was an incredible advancement for science. The incident opened up the discussion for other black holes and leaves questions for scientists to explore over the next decade.
- In December, the year concluded with the impeachment of Donald Trump by the House of Representatives. Led by a Democratic majority, the House impeached the 45th president on the grounds of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. In 2020, the Senate will hold an impeachment hearing, pulling problems for the previous decade into the new decade.



# Australian bushfires: the burning impacts

By: Emily Krupicka

For the past few months, Australia has been choking under a blanket of thick smoke due to blazing bushfires. The Australian fire season has always been dangerous, but, compared to the last decade, the recent severity seems unprecedented.

Although the Australian fires began in early September, they did not gain sufficient social traction until mid-December. In the past month, however, prominent media influencers have spoken out regarding the raging effects.

Chris Dickman, a scientific expert at the University of Sydney, estimates that over a billion animals have been killed in the bushfires; many, however, claim that a billion is a modest number when taking into account how rapidly the fires are spreading.

The threat to biodiversity has been the main ramification discussed in the media. Photographs depicting the suffering of Australian wildlife has captured the heartstrings of many, sparking numerous GoFund me pages and a call for action to protect the unique Australian fauna, shedding a light in the smoke.

As for the cause, arson has been blamed. However, a statement by the Victorian police, of Victoria, Australia, contradicts this statement. A misleading figure suggested that 183 arsonists were arrested for starting the bushfires, but police claim that those figures covered the

entirety of 2019; there is no evidence that the current bushfires were caused by arson.

Instead, lightning has been deemed the most plausible cause, but scientists have called out climate change for exacerbating the harsh conditions. The Indian Ocean Dipole, a climate phenomenon, has pushed rainy weather away from Australia. This occurrence, combined with wind, has contributed to Australia's severe drought and dry conditions.

According to a 2020 BBC article, over 24 million acres have been set ablaze. With severely decimated forests, many question how long recovery will take. As of now, there are approximately 4,000 firefighters working to control the flames.

This year's fierce and premature fire season is only "a harboring of what is to come," as mentioned by Dr. Kolden, a scientist and member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Scientists predict that the devastating fires are only a glimpse into the future effects of climate change and urge influential leaders to take action. They emphasize that the dramatic photographs and high death toll should be enough to spark social concern and warrant action.

In the words of Kolden, "We must ask ourselves: If these factors aren't enough to create a change, what is?"

## World War III?

By: Trinity Sossong

Many people know about the WWII memes floating around social media, but many don't know what caused all the WWII talk.

President Donald Trump launched several attacks against Iran on January 2, the most successful being the American MQ-9 Reaper Drone that shot missiles into a convoy that was leaving an airport in Baghdad, Iraq. The missile killed one of the passengers, Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani, who led the powerful Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, along with several other officials from Iran. Although the reason for this act is unknown, it has become increasingly clear that this was an act of revenge for the death of hundreds of Americans in the past.

After the death of Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani, the Iranian government attempted to avenge the death of their leader, sending missiles streaming into two Iraqi bases where Americans were located. Since Iran warned Iraq in advance, the U.S. took prudent measures to safe-

guard American troops and nobody was hurt.

However, an Iranian missile defense officer, thinking the United States was striking back for the Iranian retaliation, shot down a Ukrainian civilian airliner. All 176 people aboard the plane were killed, most of them being Iranians bound for China. The Iranian government then went on to deny all accusations for three days.

On a separate note, not many people are worried about the outbreak of war. Quite frankly, many are making jokes out of WWII.

"I don't really think Trump is stupid enough to start something we can't pay for," said Madison Crystal, a student of Grand Island Senior High. "If Trump does start a war, I don't think it will be a big deal."

"In my opinion, there's not much to worry about. I don't think WWII is going to start, but if it does, I don't think we'll have to worry about much," stated an anonymous source.



# Mental health matters

By: Hailie Melton

\*Student names have been changed to maintain anonymity.

Mental health. It is important to most people. Nineteen point one percent of U.S. adults experienced mental illness. That represents one in five adults. Four point six percent of U.S. adults experienced serious mental illness. That represents 1 in 25 adults, while 20 percent of adolescents (ages 10 to 19 years old) have a diagnosable mental health disorder. Fifty percent of all mental health conditions develop by the time you are 14 years old.

Many people believe that they cannot speak out about their mental health because it is “controversial” and that it is not fully accepted to talk openly about such things.

“There is such a big stigma surrounding mental health, which makes it difficult for people to open up and be honest about it. You have to make it known that everyone has mental health, and mental health is so important. There needs to be more resources for students. There needs to be more honesty. There needs to be more people making it known that someone is there for you and rallying behind you every step of your way,” Jones said.

The topic of suicide is a sensitive one, but is one that must be talked about in order to help prevent it. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in adolescents. According to Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, it takes the lives of 44,965 Americans every year, 123 every day, one every 12 minutes. Only 23-33 percent of adolescents with mental disorders get the help and care they need. That leaves out 70 percent of people who are hurting or suffering.

Many believe that mental health disorders have become overly romanticized, saying that they have been played off as something you need to have to look cool or quirky.

“Things like mental breakdowns are mainstreamed as trendy or quirky and people are saying that feeling upset for 15 minutes is a ‘mental breakdown.’ Mental health sneaks up on people, and even the happiest people can be sad, and that is not something to be ashamed of or to sweep under the rug. We shouldn’t hide when someone feels depressed or anxious. Your mental health is not shameful,” said Fitz.

Mazie agrees. “Things like depression, anxiety, OCD and schizophrenia have been used as character personalities in movies, shows and games. It’s honestly terrible to see such a serious topic be handled in a way that it can be seen as something not serious.”

Mental health disorders may be fun for some to joke about, but always remember that many people suffer from them and may not take kindly or think that your joke is funny.

# How do you celebrate New Year’s?

By: Haili Luevano

The beginning of a new year is a fun time to reflect on past accomplishments and set new goals, but not everyone celebrates the same way. In a poll released on January 8, students were asked to describe what they do to celebrate the new year.

“Every year, I invite some friends and my mom books a hotel room,” said Ashley Scott, senior. “We stay up until the hotel serves breakfast. Then once we’re done eating breakfast, we sleep for the rest of the day. There is also the tradition of drinking apple cider once the clock strikes midnight. It’s a great time I spend with my friends.”

Out of the 32 respondents, 19 said that they celebrate on New Year’s Eve, and three said that they celebrate on New Year’s Day. The remaining 10 chose both days.

When asked if it was traditional for their families to make New Year’s resolutions, 16 answered “sometimes,” 14 said “no” and the last two chose “yes.”

“My new year’s resolution is to keep my grades up and to be a better friend,” wrote Freshman Lily Aundrea Salyers.

There’s a definite mix between people when it comes to celebrating the new year. Some welcome it with friends and family, some make resolutions while others don’t, but everyone enjoys the chance to make new memories and have a good time.



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# The season of singing

By: Mackenzie Vogt

A new year of Northwest show choir has started this past month. From their debut on Premiere Night to their first competition at Papio South. Northwest's Show Choir is composed of two groups: 14 Karat Gold and Bella Voce. Both groups contain around 50 students.

Show choir as a whole has gone through many changes this year such as a new director, but also in their growth. Senior Abby Schneckloth a member of 14 Karat, remarks on how she feels the groups have changed.



**The 14 Karat group performs on Premiere Night (2020, January 9)**

*Photo Courtesy by Ashten Psota*

"There is just a different feel in the group, like [being] okay with working hard," Schneckloth said. "There used to be this feeling like people didn't want to work hard. People are way less entitled and they understand that hard work is needed for there to be an achievement."

On a more statistical side, 14 Karat Gold reached fifth place at their first competition. This allowed them to compete later

on in the competition again. Bella Voce also reached third in Prep. Jeff Vyhldal, the new director, explains the uniqueness of this accomplishment.

"Bella Voce, our JV group, our prep group, got third place. Which is the first time that's happened in eight years."

This group is immensely dedicated to what they do and has demonstrated this through their practice schedule. During third period, they have a class where they rehearse in addition to Thursday night practices. There they learn different skill sets to reach their audience apart from just the singing aspect.

"We have activities where we work on vulnerability and emotion," Schneckloth said. "If your show has no emotion, it means nothing. If you can't reach audiences, then what's the point?"

As the full swing of show choir season approaches, Vyhldal remarks on what a great year they've had so far.

"[We've made] the alumni proud, and so far it's been awesome."



**The Bella Voce choir perform on Premiere Night (2020, January 9)**

*Photo Courtesy by Ashten Psota*

## Passion, pose and public speaking

By: Emily Krupicka

For most high school students, the thought of presenting a speech is unnerving. For members of Northwest's forensics speech team, it's the standard. As public speaking season begins, students are working diligently on polishing, perfecting and presenting their hard work.

Speech at Northwest has had a long history of success. In her junior year, Senior Ashley Scott qualified for state in persuasive speaking. In her speech, she discussed blind advocacy and the implications of people funding corporations that are using donations dishonestly.

"Sadly, I was the only person who qualified for speech last year. Although qualifying for state isn't everything, I hope that more people can go this year. It was a really great experience."

With numerous first places at competitions already, there is a high possibility of numerous members qualifying this year. So far, it is evident that the Northwest Speech Team is off to a great start.

Brian Gibson, the new head coach, has had previous experience instructing speech. Last year, Gibson operated as the assistant coach.

"I stepped back from coaching last year, and now that I've stepped back into the coaching position, I am more excited than ever," Gibson said. "I have such great members on the team; they've all been working so hard this year, and I am extremely proud of them."

Everyone has shown immense elation for this year's season. In

fact, Sophomore Ann Smallwood, a varsity competitor, has been working on her events since last summer and is very excited to see them grow.

"I really love speech. Through competitions in different events and being around different people, I've made so many new friends. It's honestly a really great experience."

Smallwood's active involvement with forensics this year has contributed greatly to the team. With all of the changes that members have endured throughout the year, both Smallwood and Scott have stepped up as impactful leaders.

Although the speech season has already started, it's not too late to join. If you or someone you know would like to join the team, contact Brian Gibson as soon as possible.





# SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

By: Mackenzie Vogt

## KAYLEE JONES

**What middle school did you attend?**

"Westridge."

**What are your plans for next year?**

"I'm going to CCC and [to] get my RN [Registered Nurse]."

**What advice would you give freshmen?**

"Don't stress out too much about grades."

**What is your favorite part about being a senior?**

"That I get to leave in a couple of months."

**What is a fun fact about yourself?**

"I have a tattoo."



Photo Courtesy of Kaylee Jones

## AYDEN RUZICKA

**What middle school did you attend?**

"I went to Westridge."

**What are your plans for next year?**

"I plan on going to Hastings College to study Psychology."

**What advice would you give freshmen?**

"You don't have to study, but make sure to do your homework because that is your studying."

**What is your favorite part about being a senior?**

"The thought of almost being done, like it's almost over."

**What is a fun fact about yourself?**

"I read way too much."



Photo Courtesy of Ayden Ruzicka

## HAILEY SPELLBRINK

**What middle school did you attend?**

"I went to Walnut Middle School."

**What are your plans for next year?**

"I plan on going to Hastings CCC and start focusing on photography."

**What advice would you give freshmen?**

"Don't doubt yourself. Even if you think something is going to be hard, just keep pushing yourself."

**What is your favorite part about being a senior?**

"Honestly, the excitement that I have to look forward to for next year. It's different. I'm ready to leave. It's a good feeling."

**What is a fun fact about yourself?**

"I know how to play the piano."



Photo Courtesy of Hailey Spellbrink

## In the news

By: Haili Luevano

- Grand Island locals will raffle off a bike at Harley-Davidson on November 14, in an attempt to raise money for veterans attending Central Community College. Referred to as Operation Zero, this is part of a bigger attempt to raise awareness about the suicide rate for veterans. As of 2017, this number averaged about 28 a day.
- Two members of the Northwest school board, Dan Leiser and Robin Schutt, were under threat of being removed through a petition by the rest of the board. The effort fell through when not enough signatures were obtained by January 15.
- Seth Lookhart, a dentist in Anchorage, Alaska, was convicted of 46 felony and misdemeanor counts on January 17 after sharing a video of him removing a patient's tooth while riding a hoverboard. He was also charged with fraud for diverting funds of over \$25,000 by billing Medicaid for unnecessary procedures.
- Thousands of citizens hit the streets on January 11 in honor of 2020's first Women's March. Many signs sported disapproval of "Trumpism," a term dedicated to the support of President Trump. They also advocated for a growth in numbers.
- Iran threatened to secede from a global treaty if European countries continued to tell the U.N. Security Council that they were allegedly violating the 2015 nuclear agreement, which Trump withdrew the U.S. from in 2018. France, Britain and Germany responded by formally sanctioning Iran.
- China has confirmed a human-to-human transmission of a new coronavirus. It's speculated that the virus originated from a food market in Wuhan and spread to Guangdong after family members visited relatives there. So far, 217 people have been infected.



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